

TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

TECH IN BLOOM

Would You Like Fries With That?

In Part Two of my examination of self-service menus, I discuss how improving employee productivity goes far beyond basic HRM self service. **By Naomi Bloom**



Naomi Lee Bloom,
Managing Partner of
Bloom & Wallace, may be
reached at 239-454-7305
or naombloom@
mindspring.com.

Last month's column discussed the many self-service threads that must be woven together to deliver efficient business processes. For example, onboarding not only involves many HRM-specific self-service interactions—benefits enrollment, work scheduling, and the provision of emergency contact information—but it also involves many non-HRM self-service interactions—providing office space and supplies; assigning computers, cell phones, facility keys, other equipment, and my personal favorite, the company AMEX card; granting specific system access permissions; and establishing personalized portal preferences, to name a few. Another common business process that involves both HRM and non-HRM self-service interactions is business travel—researching benefit coverages and determining how they are affected if injuries or sickness occur while traveling; making travel reservations, including frequent flyer preferences; paying attention to travel allowances determined by position, salary level, etc.; making travel changes before and during the trip; and preparing the always popular travel expense and accomplishment report in conjunction with one's time and attendance report.

In each of these cases, it's hard enough to achieve the productive level of self-service dialogue integration and data semantics when you're running a generic administrative application backbone for your entire organization. Imagine the challenge you face when

It's hard enough to achieve productive self-service when you're running a generic administrative application backbone for your entire organization. Imagine the challenge you face when you outsource piecemeal...

you (1) outsource HRM processes in piecemeal to several providers or outsource your HRM processes to a single provider that uses separate applications to create their HRM delivery system (HRMDS) and outsources travel and expense to yet another provider, (2) have your own IT organization handle the granting of specific system access permissions, (3) use AMEX to manage card-related self-service transactions, (4) use your own facilities people to manage the assignment of

offices, and then (5) outsource small supplies procurement to yet another provider. If you want to see a self-service dialogue and semantic integration challenge that approaches getting all members of the United Nations to agree on anything, just try this back at the office.

Can it be done? Absolutely! But there's going to be quite a lot of work that is often overlooked in HRM outsourcing agreements.

During your transition to a comprehensive HRO provider's HRMDS or your incorporation of a single-process outsourcing agreement into your own HRMDS, not only will there be some level of initial systems integration and process redesign work to be done by your organization, but you're going to be performing some degree of systems integration every time one of the participants changes their approach, systems, or, in the case of outsourced processes, pricing. Most important is to make sure that, via scenario testing, you understand *all* of the initial and ongoing systems integration work for which you'll be responsible and, therefore, *all* of the costs and risks associated with your planned outsourcing arrangements. All too often this area of self-service integration, which is critical to achieving real productivity improvements, is overlooked.

One outcome of this analysis may be to encourage you to consider even more comprehensive HRM outsourcing, to include those ancillary processes that create self-service touch points that affect the majority of your workforce. Another outcome may be to include a much broader range of workforce-affecting business event scenarios in your assessment of the HRMDS of proposed comprehensive HRO providers, to determine just how integrated their self-service experience is in regards to dialogue protocol and data semantics. And you shouldn't be surprised to discover that those providers who are stitching together their delivery system's platform from an assortment of independently-developed commercially-available software components will have either had to do considerable systems integration work themselves or will be passing along to your workforce the demands of a non-integrated and non-standard self-service experience.

There are many ways to achieve the level of self-service dialogue and data consistency that increases user productivity. Ignoring these issues isn't likely to lead to any one of them. **HRO**